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## **Senators sign Bennett letter condemning tactics of anti-immigration group FAIR**

*Bennett also highlights errors in FAIR attack of high-tech industry*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – U.S. Senator Bob Bennett (R-Utah) today denounced the activities of the anti-immigrant group FAIR (Federation of American Immigration Reform) and released a copy of a letter being signed by other U.S. senators condemning FAIR's divisive smear campaign against immigrants and Senator Spence Abraham in Michigan.

"I decided to circulate this letter after learning of the erroneous and despicable advertisements in Michigan designed to incite fear and hatred of immigrants. Several of my colleagues expressed a desire to speak out against FAIR's unseemly campaign," Senator Bennett said. "Certainly if Michigan newspapers and responsible community leaders have denounced FAIR's advertisements, senators have a responsibility to also discredit this type of intolerance."

Senator Bennett, chairman of the Senate Republican High-Tech Task Force, began circulating the letter last week highlighting FAIR's attack against Senator Abraham's ethnicity as well as the significant errors in its media campaign on a critical high-tech issue. Unaware of the facts behind the issue of H-1B visas and their impact on the American economy, FAIR's TV advertisement erroneously calls the proposed H-1B visa legislation pending in the Congress, "the Abraham Foreign Workers Bill," and alleges it will "import more than 200,000 foreign workers a year to take good American jobs."

To the contrary, says Bennett, stating there is absolutely no evidence Americans lose jobs when a foreign national receives an H-1B visa, and substantial evidence that H-1B workers have contributed significantly to the growth and health of the U.S. economy in general and the Michigan economy in particular.

"As we have heard repeatedly from high-tech industry leaders and the nation's chief economists, individuals on H-1B visas help create American jobs and provide greater security to Americans currently in the workforce. Through their innovation and productivity, these H-1B workers have been a critical ingredient fueling America's economic engine," Bennett added. "With Michigan's unemployment rate below the national average, Senator Abraham is to be commended for addressing a critical labor shortage that will keep Michigan's economy strong and create more

jobs for the people of his state."

Bennett noted H-1B workers are hired for unfilled jobs and that there are substantial measures in the law preventing an H-1B visa holder from "taking" a job from an American employee. Bennett also noted Section 212(n)(1)(A) of the Immigration and Nationality Act which states that it is illegal to pay a foreign worker in H-1B status less than a U.S. worker in an equivalent job.

The pending legislation, its correct title "The American Competitiveness in the 21st Century Act," also includes over \$450 million in funding for training and education to help encourage new workers and students to enter technical fields, which is an important part of the bill and its thrust to make America more competitive. None of the bill's features on training and education is mentioned in the ad.

Last week, Cardinal Adam Maida, the Archbishop of Detroit, called the ads "despicable," saying "this kind of bigotry is divisive." The Jewish Community Council of Detroit said FAIR's ads use "the same type of ugly rhetoric that stimulated ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Kosovo, and was used by the Nazis throughout Europe." The Detroit Coalition for Responsible Immigration Policy said that "such ads generate prejudice and hatred against the most vulnerable population in our community. Immigration bashing is a form of bigotry that must not be tolerated by responsible citizens."

Several Michigan newspapers have also editorialized against FAIR including: The Detroit News, Detroit Free Press, Kalamazoo Gazette, Oakland Press, Saginaw News and Grand Rapids Press. Several Michigan broadcasters have pulled FAIR's ads in response.

A copy of the letter follows:

Dear Colleague:

We are writing to bring to your attention an important matter. An anti-immigrant group called FAIR, the Federation for American Immigration Reform, is engaging in a smear campaign against immigrants in general and one of our colleagues in particular.

In one advertisement, FAIR placed a photograph of Senator Spence Abraham next to one of terrorist Osama bin Laden in an attempt to smear Senator Abraham as a supporter of terrorism because of his ethnicity. When recently asked in the Wall Street Journal about this obvious ethnic slur, the executive director of FAIR claimed, incredibly, "We thought Abraham was Jewish," even though numerous newspaper articles and FAIR's own newsletter had referenced Senator Abraham's Lebanese heritage.

Attacking individuals based on their religion or ethnicity appears to be a specialty of FAIR. The Miami Herald has reported that FAIR's founder expressed the concern that "too many new American immigrants are Roman Catholic." The Wall Street Journal wrote of an

active FAIR member who is engaged in an effort to sterilize women in the Third World, in part to limit the potential pool of future immigrants. The executive director of FAIR has made anti-Catholic statements of his own, telling a reporter, "Certainly we would encourage people in other countries to have small families. Otherwise they'll all be coming here, because there's no room at the Vatican."

FAIR's newest attack against Senator Abraham on H-1B immigrant visa legislation has been denounced by Michigan newspapers as a campaign of fear against all immigrants. Desperate because Congress opposes FAIR's extremist agenda, FAIR's executive director has resorted to calling Senator Abraham a "scumbag" in a recent interview. One of the great privileges of being an American is the right to say things that are stupid and even offensive; FAIR is clearly exercising that right. However, other Americans, even U.S. senators, have an equal right--indeed, responsibility--to speak out in response. Accordingly, we strongly condemn and reject this sort of smear campaign and urge all of our colleagues, regardless of party, to do the same. FAIR's venom may be able to go uncensored, but it should never go uncensored or uncondemned.

Sincerely, [signed by Robert F. Bennett and 18 other Senators]

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<http://www.senate.gov/~bennett>